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This Issue--

LIVESTOCK SLAUGHTER

July Red Meat Production

WEST VIRGINIA-- Commercial red meat production during July 2004 totaled 300,000 pounds. This was 6 percent below June 2004 and 17 percent below July 2003 production. Commercial red meat production is the carcass weight after slaughter including beef, veal, pork, and lamb and mutton. Individual commodity production is total live weight of commercial slaughter.

Commercial cattle slaughter totaled 328,000 pounds live weight, down 24 percent from July 2003. Cattle slaughter totaled 300 head, down 100 head from the previous year. The average live weight, at 1,050 pounds, was down 1 pound from a year ago.

Commercial calf slaughter was not published to avoid disclosing individual operations.

Commercial hog slaughter totaled 122,000 pounds live weight, down 8 percent from last year. Hog slaughter totaled 500 head, down 100 head from the previous year. The average live weight, at 228 pounds, was down 8 pounds from the previous year.

Commercial sheep and lamb slaughter totaled 700 pounds live weight. Sheep and lamb slaughter totaled 100 head. The average live weight was 114 pounds. The previous year's sheep and lamb slaughter was not published to avoid disclosing individual operations.

UNITED STATES-- Commercial red meat production for the United States totaled 3.71 billion pounds in July, down 8 percent from the 4.05 billion pounds produced in July 2003.

Beef production, at 2.10 billion pounds, was 14 percent below the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.79 million head, down 15 percent from July 2003. The average live weight was up 14 pounds from the previous year, at 1,239 pounds.

Veal production totaled 13.4 million pounds, 9 percent below July a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 69,000 head, down 19 percent from July 2003. The average live weight was 36 pounds above last year, at 325 pounds.

Pork production totaled 1.58 billion pounds, down slightly from the previous year. Hog kill totaled 8.09 million head, slightly below July 2003. The average live weight was unchanged the previous year, at 262 pounds.

Lamb and mutton production, at 14.2 million pounds, was down 10 percent from July 2003. Sheep slaughter totaled 220,800 head, 8 percent below last year. The average live weight was 128 pounds, down 3 pounds from July a year ago.

January to July 2004 commercial red meat production was 26.0 billion pounds, down 4 percent from 2003. Accumulated beef production was down 9 percent from last year, veal was down 11 percent, pork was up 3 percent from last year, and lamb and mutton production was down 2 percent.

July 2003 contained 23 weekdays (including one holiday) and 4 Saturdays. **July 2004** contained 22 weekdays (including one holiday) and 5 Saturdays.

CHICKENS & EGGS

July Egg Production Up 2 Percent

U.S. egg production totaled 7.54 billion during July 2004, up 2 percent from last year. Production included 6.45 billion table eggs, and 1.10 billion hatching eggs, of which 1.04 billion were broiler-type and 56.0 million were egg-type. The total number of layers during July 2004 averaged 342 million, up 2 percent from a year earlier. July egg production per 100 layers was 2,207 eggs, down slightly from July 2003.

July 2004 contained 22 weekdays, 5 Saturdays, 1 holiday compared to July 2003 which contained 23 weekdays, 4 Saturdays and 1 holiday.

All layers in the U.S. on August 1, 2004, totaled 342 million, up 2 percent from a year ago. The 342 million layers consisted of 283 million layers producing table or market type eggs, 56.2 million layers producing broiler-type hatching eggs, and 2.40 million layers producing egg-type hatching eggs. Rate of lay per day on August 1, 2004, averaged 71.0 eggs per 100 layers, down 1 percent from a year ago.

Laying flocks in the 30 major egg producing States produced 7.05 billion eggs during July 2004, up 2 percent from a year ago. The average number of layers during July, at 319 million, was up 2 percent from a year ago.

Individual State estimates are available for the 30 major egg producing States. These States are as follows: AL, AR, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, HI, IL, IN, IA, ME, MD, MI, MN, MS, MO, NE, NY, NC, OH, OK, OR, PA, SC, SD, TX, VA, WA, and WI and account for approximately 94 percent of the total U.S. egg production. Production for the other States are grouped into an "Other States" category and combined with the 30 States published individually to obtain a U.S. estimate.

Egg-Type Chicks Hatched Down 4 Percent

Egg-type chicks hatched during July totaled 34.1 million, down 4 percent from July 2003. Eggs in incubators totaled 31.1 million on August 1, 2004, up 1 percent from a year ago.

Domestic placements of **egg-type pullet chicks** for future hatchery supply flocks by leading breeders totaled 243,000 during July 2004, up 6 percent from July 2003.

Broiler Hatch Up 4 Percent

The July 2004 hatch of **broiler-type chicks**, at 807 million, was up 4 percent from July of the previous year. There were 663 million eggs in incubators on August 1, 2004, up 3 percent from a year earlier.

Leading breeders placed 6.83 million **broiler-type pullet chicks** for future domestic hatchery supply flocks during July 2004, down 3 percent from July 2003.

SEPTEMBER CROP PRODUCTION

United States Corn production is forecast at 11.0 billion bushels, up fractionally from last month and 8 percent above 2003. Based on conditions as of September 1, yields are expected to average 149.4 bushels per acre, up 0.5 bushel from August and 7.2 bushels above last year. If realized, both production and yield would be the largest on record. The previous record for both was set last year when production was estimated at 10.1 billion bushels and yield was 142.2 bushels per acre. Yields are forecast at record high levels in all Corn Belt States, except Minnesota and Wisconsin, as weather conditions have been mostly favorable throughout the growing season. However, brief periods of freezing temperatures in the northern Corn Belt and adjacent areas of the Great Plains raised concerns about the crop being able to fully develop before a killing frost occurs.

Soybean production is forecast at 2.84 billion bushels, down 1 percent from the August forecast, but 17 percent above 2003. If realized, this would be the second highest production on record. Based on conditions as of September 1, yields are expected to average 38.5 bushels per acre, down 0.6 bushel from August. Below-normal temperatures and adequate moisture across most of the Corn Belt, the Great Plains, and the Delta in August favored the soybean crop during the critical stages of development. However, yield prospects declined in the northern tier of States due to cool weather. A brief period of freezing temperatures slowed the development of a crop already behind in maturity in North Dakota and Minnesota.

TURKEYS RAISED

West Virginia Turkeys Raised Down

West Virginia ---The **preliminary estimate of turkeys raised** in West Virginia during 2004 is 3.4 million birds, down 900,000 or 21 percent from last year.

United States ---The **preliminary estimate of turkeys raised** in the United States during 2004 is 263 million, down 4 percent from the number raised during 2003.

The following six States are expected to account for about two-thirds of the turkeys produced in the United States during 2004:

Minnesota, at 46.5 million birds, is expected to raise the largest number of any state, showing a 3 percent increase from last year.

North Carolina ranks second with 39.0 million birds, down 8 percent from 2003.

Arkansas is in third place by producing 28.0 million birds, 7 percent less than a year ago.

Missouri growers expect to produce 21.5 million birds in 2004, down 9 percent from the previous year.

Virginia, at 19.0 million birds is down 17 percent from 2003.

California expects to raise 16.0 million turkeys, 8 percent less than a year earlier.

POULTRY SLAUGHTER

Ready-to-Cook Weight Down 1 Percent

Poultry certified wholesome during July 2004 (ready-to-cook weight) totaled 3.39 billion pounds, down 1 percent from the amount certified in July 2003. Updated totals for June 2004 show that 3.43 billion pounds were certified.

The preliminary total live weight of poultry inspected during July 2004 was 4.55 billion pounds, down 2 percent from a year ago. Young chickens inspected totaled 3.88 billion pounds, down 1 percent from July 2003, and mature chickens at 69.6 million pounds, were down 8 percent from the previous year. Turkey inspections totaled 585 million pounds, down 6 percent, and ducks totaled 14.3 million pounds, up 13 percent from last year.

Young chickens slaughtered during July 2004 averaged 5.22 pounds per bird, up 2 percent from July 2003. The average live weight of mature chickens was 5.72 pounds per bird, down 3 percent from a year ago. Turkeys slaughtered during July 2004 averaged 26.6 pounds per bird, up 1 percent from July 2003.

Ante-mortem condemnations during July 2004 totaled 21.8 million pounds. Condemnations were 0.48 percent of the live weight inspected, compared to 0.47 percent a year earlier . Post-mortem condemnations, at 49.7 million pounds (N.Y. dressed weight), were 1.21 percent of quantities inspected, compared with 1.07 percent a year earlier.

July 2004 contained 22 weekdays (including one holiday) and five Saturdays. July 2003 contained 23 weekdays (including one holiday) and four Saturdays.

US MUSHROOM VALUE

All Mushroom Sales Up 1 Percent, Value Up 3 Percent

Sales of the 2003-04 U.S. mushroom crop are 857 million pounds, up 1 percent from both the 2002-03 and 2001-02 seasons. Value of sales for the 2003-04 U.S. mushroom crop is $920 million, up 3 percent from the previous season and 1 percent above the 2001-02 season. The number of growers, at 278, is up 13 from last season. Average price is $1.07 per pound, up 2 cents from 2002-03.

Sales reported by growers of Agaricus mushrooms for fresh market are 701 million pounds, up 1 percent from last season. Sales of Agaricus mushrooms for processing are 143 million pounds, 3 percent above last season. Value of sales for all Agaricus mushrooms totaled 880 million dollars, up 3 percent from the previous season and 1 percent higher than 2001-02.

Specialty Mushrooms - Shiitake, Oyster, and all Other Exotics

Value of sales for commercially grown specialty mushrooms in 2003-04 is $40.0 million, up 16 percent from the 2002-03 season. A specialty grower is defined as having at least 200 natural wood logs in production or some commercial indoor growing area. The average price per pound received by growers, at $3.04, is up 15 cents from the previous season.

Sales of Shiitake mushrooms totaled 7.54 million pounds for the 2003-04 season, up 7 percent from the previous season. Price per pound received by growers, at $3.24, is up 16 cents from 2002-03. Sales volume of Oyster mushrooms, at 3.97 million pounds, is up 11 percent from the previous season. Sales of exotic mushrooms, other than Shiitake or Oyster, are 1.65 million pounds, up 28 percent from last season.

Certified Organic Agaricus and Specialty Mushrooms

Growers sold 34.9 million pounds of mushrooms that were certified organic during the 2003-04 growing season, triple the amount certified during 2002-03. Out of the 34.9 million pounds, 7.86 million pounds, or 23 percent of the total were sold as certified organic mushrooms, while the rest were sold without the certified organic label. This compares to 3.49 million pounds, or 31 percent sold as certified organic during the 2002-03 crop year. Agaricus mushrooms accounted for 76 percent of the mushrooms sold as certified organic, while all specialty mushrooms made up the remainder. These certified organic sales represent 1 percent of the 2003-04 total mushroom sales. The number of certified organic mushroom growers totaled 31, up 1 from the previous season. These growers represent 11 percent of the 278 total mushroom producers.

US AND CANADAIN CATTLE

July Cattle Inventory Up 1 Percent

All cattle and calves in the U. S. and Canada combined totaled 120.4 million head on July 1, 2004, up 1 percent from a year ago. All cows and heifers that have calved, at 48.9 million head, was up 1 percent from a year ago.

All cattle and calves in the United States as of July 1, 2004, totaled 103.6 million head, down slightly from the 103.9 million on July 1, 2003 and 1 percent below the 105.1 million two years ago.

All cattle and calves in Canada as of July 1, 2004, totaled 16.8 million head, up 6 percent from the 15.7 million on July 1, 2003, and 9 percent above the 15.4 million two years ago. All cows and heifers that have calved, at 6.4 million, was up 8 percent from the 6.0 million on July 1, 2003, and 9 percent above the 5.9 million from two years ago.

FARM LABOR

Hired Workers Up 2 Percent, Wage Rates Up 2 Percent From a Year Ago

There were 1,293,000 hired workers on the Nation’s farms and ranches during the week of July 11-17, 2004, up 2 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 953,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 340,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of $9.10 per hour during the July 2004 reference week, up 22 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of $8.42 per hour, up 25 cents from last July, while livestock workers earned $8.75 per hour compared with $8.57 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at $8.50 per hour, was up 24 cents from last year.

The number of hours worked averaged 39.3 hours for hired workers during the survey week, down 1 percent from a year ago.

The largest increases in the number of hired farm workers from last year occurred in the Southeast (Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina), Northeast II (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania), Lake (Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin), Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Mountain III (Arizona and New Mexico), and Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi) regions. Despite moderate rains in the Southeast region, peach harvest remained in full swing. Peach production was expected to be much higher than last year in Alabama and South Carolina, thus increasing the requirement for field workers. In the Northeast II region, continued expansion in the beef, dairy and greenhouse industries caused increased demand for hired workers. Warm weather in the Lake region accelerated vegetable development which necessitated more field workers to keep up with the harvest. In the Southern Plains and Mountain III regions, irrigation of cropland increased and supplemental feeding of livestock became active as pastures deteriorated, both of which caused more hired workers to be required. After several weeks of excessive rain in the Delta region, the reference week was relatively dry, which led to increased field activity. Therefore, more hired workers were needed.

The largest decreases in the number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in California, Florida, the Northeast I (New England and New York), Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana and

Ohio), and Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia) regions. In California, worker demand was lower partially due to below normal temperatures prior to the reference week which slowed crop development. Also, some melon fields were plowed under and some stonefruit orchards were left unpicked due to low prices, both of which lessened the need for hired workers. Rain and muddy conditions halted field activities in New York, southern Indiana and much of Florida, thus reducing the demand for hired workers in the Northeast I and Corn Belt I regions and in Florida. In the Appalachian II region, above normal rainfall kept pastures green which lessened the need for supplemental feeding and reduced the demand for hired workers.

Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Mountain II (Colorado, Nevada and Utah), Southeast, Pacific (Oregon and Washington), Southern Plains, and Appalachian I (North Carolina and Virginia) regions. The higher wages in the Mountain II region were mainly due to a larger concentration of salaried workers putting in fewer hours and a higher proportion of skilled workers needed for the apricot harvest in Utah. In the Southeast region, wages were up because of a larger percentage of fruit and greenhouse workers in the work force. The higher wages in the Pacific region were because of the increased demand for skilled workers to keep up with harvest of the rapidly developing stonefruit and berry crops. In the Southern Plains region, wages were up due to continued strength in cattle prices causing a strong demand for hired workers on beef operations. Wages were higher in the Appalachian I region because of a lower proportion of part-time workers in the work force.

AGRICULTURAL PRICES

Hay Prices Received by Farmers

West Virginia--Market year average prices received for **all hay** during the June 1, 2003 to May 31, 2004 marketing year was down 9 percent at $57.50 per ton, compared to $63.50 per ton during the same period the previous year. **Alfalfa hay** market year average prices received was down 9 percent at $103.00 per ton, compared to $113.00 per ton during the same period the previous year. **Other hay** market year average prices received was also down 9 percent at $52.00 per ton, compared to $57.00 per ton during the same period the previous year.

United States-- Market year average prices received for **all hay** during the June 1, 2003 to May 31, 2004 marketing year was down 7 percent at $85.50 per ton, compared to $92.40 per ton during the same period the previous year. **Alfalfa hay** market year average prices received was down 9 percent at $90.80 per ton, compared to $100.00. **Other hay** market year average prices received was also down 4 percent at $70.90 per ton, compared to $73.80 per ton during the same period the previous year.

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